

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES
STRATEGIC PREVENTION PLAN

Since 1998, San Diego County has utilized the General Management System (GMS) framework to establish and guide all County operations and service delivery systems. Using GMS ensures sound management, appropriate coordination, fiscal and operational discipline and shared commitment across all County departments to accomplish the County's Strategic Goals, which are:

- *Improved opportunities for children*
- *Manage the region's natural resources to protect quality of life and support economic development*
- *Promote safe and livable communities*

Utilizing GMS, Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) developed Vision and Mission Statements. The Vision and Mission statements provided guidance for the development of the Strategic Prevention Plan.

- *ADS Vision: Safe, healthy and thriving communities free of alcohol and drug problems*
- *ADS Mission: Lead the County of San Diego in reducing alcohol and other drug problems through community engagement*

The County of San Diego's alcohol and other drug prevention service system is designed to prevent the devastation of alcohol and other drug problems among youth and transitional aged youth up to the age of 25 within the communities of San Diego County through implementation of a community-based, environmental prevention model by using evidence-based strategies. The Prevention Plan is a coordinated approach that incorporates the following five Strategic Prevention Framework activities, as defined through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), into every alcohol and other drug prevention project and/or campaign:

1. Planning – establishment of a comprehensive strategic approach resulting in a data-driven plan to address the problems identified in the assessment;

2. Assessment – data collection to define problems, resources, and community strengths;
3. Capacity – development of community capacity, provider, and county government leadership, and sustainability to address needs;
4. Implementation – implementing evidence-based prevention strategies, programs, policies and practices; and
5. Evaluation – continual measurement of the outcomes of the prevention strategies to measure their impact through standardized, consistent data collection and common survey tools

These five steps are implemented on a continuous basis, based on changing conditions, community needs and emerging issues. Strategic partners and allies from all sectors of the community including parents, youth, healthcare, law enforcement, government, schools, businesses and the community at large are necessary to the success of San Diego's Prevention Plan.

San Diego County is a very diverse region with a population of over 3 million people in 18 municipalities and has three international border crossings with Mexico. The region is home to 18 separate Indian reservations, four major universities, seven community colleges, and military facilities for the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. There is a large tourism industry, an international airport, and large attractions including Sea World, the Zoo, Wild Animal Park, Legoland, the Del Mar Racetrack, beaches, Petco Park, Qualcomm Stadium and cruise ship terminals.

San Diego County has a long history of working collaboratively across all systems to address common problems and includes partnerships with federal, state and local law enforcement, MADD, hospitals and trauma centers, nationally recognized university research facilities, and SAMHSA Drug Free Community grantees that add value and resources benefiting the region, but are not funded by the County of San Diego.

Reviews of the local data reflect that problems caused by alcohol continue to be more prevalent than problems associated with all other drugs, including approximately 15,000 DUI arrests annually. In addition, in 2006 there were 1,500 arrests for reckless driving with a blood alcohol level under .08 and 752 fatal alcohol-involved crashes. An additional issue for this region is the proximity to the border where the drinking age is 18 and where alcohol is directly marketed to youth and young adults, contributing to DUIs, underage alcohol use and exposure to other risky and/or criminal behavior. Admissions to treatment with alcohol as the primary drug increased nearly 50% between 2005 and 2007, and the number of admissions with alcohol as the secondary drug is increasing.

San Diego has an endemic methamphetamine problem that was originally recognized in early 1996. Nearly half of all treatment admissions for adults in the region are continue to reflect methamphetamine use and related problems, and the drug is integrally linked to family violence, chronic health and mental health issues, along with a myriad of other devastating consequences. There were 174 meth-related deaths in San Diego County in 2006, and 184 in 2007.

While methamphetamine is the primary drug of choice among adult treatment admissions, marijuana is overwhelmingly the drug of choice for adolescents admitted into treatment, with approximately two-thirds of all adolescent admissions due to marijuana. According to the California Healthy Kids Survey, by 11th grade, nearly 20% of adolescents report having used marijuana in the past 30 days.

Because there are never enough resources to address all of the various alcohol and other drug problems in the community, the County of San Diego's Prevention Plan focuses its efforts toward three broad countywide initiatives, based on the impact these substances have had on our system over time:

- Binge and Underage Drinking Initiative (BUDI) - addresses binge and underage drinking issues in our communities and across the Border;
- Methamphetamine Strike Force (MSF) - addresses the personal, community and environmental impact methamphetamine; and the
- Health Advocates Rejecting Marijuana (HARM) – addresses the availability of marijuana, paraphernalia, business practices, and media messaging that encourage, normalize or trivialize marijuana use.

Providing a targeted focus on these issues allows the County to develop long term, strategic and sustainable prevention plans for each initiative, including youth input, provides coordination and shared resources where possible, incorporates emerging issues in a mindful way and provides flexible prioritization in each region regarding how each initiative will be tailored to specific community needs. Each regional provider implements prevention activities that are responsive to the needs of their respective communities, and tailors activities accordingly. A key task of the regional providers is to work with the community and to leverage existing community resources, such as schools, other coalitions and Drug Free Communities grantees to assist in accomplishing overall prevention goals.

Although the County's Prevention Plan revolves around the aforementioned three primary initiatives, the establishment of a regionally based, community driven system allows regions the flexibility to expand strategies, based on community needs and readiness and leverage community partnerships to respond to emerging prevention needs within their communities. As emerging issues develop, regional prevention providers use the five steps of assessment,

capacity, planning, implementation and evaluation to ensure the response is data-driven, evidence-based, and evaluated to demonstrate effectiveness.

Regional Work

Contracted regional providers work with their communities and partners on the three County Prevention Initiatives to reduce problems. Regional partners include schools, youth including Friday Nite-Live and other after school programs, other coalitions, Drug Free Community grantees, city governments, County offices, law enforcement and each other to accomplish prevention goals.

Each regional provider develops an annual work plan utilizing a logic model to identify the local impacts and problems of the targeted County Initiatives and identify appropriate activities. To include all community interests, regional providers include youth and other stakeholders in the development of logic models and annual work plans, and utilize the assistance and tools developed by the workgroups.

San Diego County's environmental prevention system consisting of skilled community-based service providers that are linked to the three County Prevention Initiatives, assures full coordination and continuation of effort through a clearly defined, staged process designed to change community acceptance and norms regarding the acceptability of abusing alcohol and other drugs. Utilizing community-based, environmental prevention strategies and tools is a cost effective way to facilitate needed changes and sustain the gains made in each community. Once a particular solution's effectiveness has been validated, it is shared with other communities and their regional providers for potential replication or adaptation.

An important element in the County's model for implementing an environmental prevention campaign is the role of media advocacy. Media advocacy is necessary to identify the problem to the larger community and to introduce the value of the identified solution to the community. Once the particular solution is implemented, media advocacy ensures the public, including the sectors and systems directly affected by the solution, are well-informed and encouraged to embrace the new policy. This is an essential part of the "norming" process described above. Once community norms have changed, sustainability of the particular change requires reduced effort. In addition, media advocacy is used to bring issues to the public's conscience and to engage the community in developing a response.

Enforcement of the identified solution is accomplished through a variety of methods. Depending on the particular community, it may include traditional law enforcement efforts, but may also incorporate community oriented policing, neighborhood watch activities, and monitoring activities by community coalitions.

In addition to governmental funding, the three County Initiatives are maintained by an array of local sources, both through actual funding contributions, and ongoing resource leveraging with partner organizations and stakeholders.

Workgroup Structure

The County of San Diego's prevention system is implemented through a broad array of contracted community-based prevention service providers. The providers incorporate the activities of the Prevention Plan to ensure full coordination and continuation of efforts by working together in focused workgroups for each initiative.

Each initiative has associated workgroups focused on specific activities by completing assessments, identifying the region's capacity to address needs, planning and implementing strategic approaches to address the issue areas, and evaluating their effectiveness. Although each workgroup maintains their specific goals and objectives, the specific activities of each workgroup evolve over time to ensure ongoing responsiveness to the needs of communities. The application of the workgroup strategies is tailored to each individual community, to acknowledge different cultures and needs throughout the county.

The purpose of the workgroup structure is to address common issues and concerns across all regions regarding the Binge and Underage Drinking Initiative, Methamphetamine Strike Force and Health Advocates Rejecting Marijuana to assure a countywide cost-effective, consistent and coordinated response to community problems associated with these issues. The involvement of community-based prevention providers within the initiative workgroups leverages limited resources, and broadens community-wide environmental prevention messaging.

Evaluation

All regional work and workgroup activities include evaluation components that document the process of all activities and measure results. This includes a review of current best practices, specific activity measures, and tracking of objective community indicators to assess change. The evaluation activities are conducted by an independent evaluation contractor, who provides continuous feedback in information to the regional collaboratives and workgroups.

Initiative Descriptions

Binge and Underage Drinking Initiative

GOAL: Reduce underage and high risk drinking by changing community norms, policies and practices regarding alcohol consumption.

Objective: Reduce the availability, accessibility and visibility of alcohol to youth by leveraging community capacity and developing resources.

Activities:

1. Implement and enforce social host ordinances throughout the San Diego region; amend social host ordinances where appropriate for purposes of consistency and to facilitate enforcement (Workgroup: Social Access)
2. Ensure community special events, activities, and venues adopt practices that prohibit underage alcohol consumption (Workgroup: Social Access)
3. Provide technical assistance, education, and facilitate training of Responsible Beverage Sales and Services in San Diego County and Tijuana, Mexico to retail clerks, managers, and owners of ABC-licensed establishments to prevent underage drinking and over-consumption, including underage drinking and over-consumption in Tijuana, where the drinking age is 18. (Workgroup: Commercial Access)
4. Promote alcohol outlet policies, practices and conditions that prevent youth access, over concentration, visibility, neighborhood disruptions and enhance community capacity for increased control (Workgroup: Commercial Access)
5. Promote practices that reduce marketing that targets youth; increase the problem solving ability of the community to resist industry exploitation (Workgroup: Alcohol Marketing)
6. Reduce widespread alcohol advertising and promotion of youth-oriented alcoholic beverages (Workgroup: Alcohol Marketing)
7. Promote policies and practices that prevent the exploitation of cultural symbols and holidays in the marketing of alcohol (Workgroup: Alcohol Marketing)

Methamphetamine Strike Force

GOAL: Reduce the social and economic impact of methamphetamine in San Diego County.

Objective: Reduce the impact of methamphetamine-related problems in communities and the marketing of products that support, glamorize, or trivialize meth use by leveraging community capacity and developing resources.

Activities:

1. Develop and promote landlord practices to support drug-free housing. (Workgroup: Neighborhood Safety Improvement)
2. Facilitate neighborhood cleanup efforts to support drug-free community environments. (Workgroup: Neighborhood Safety Improvement)

3. Develop and promote business practices that prohibit the availability of video games that glamorize or trivialize drug use. (Workgroup: Policy and Business Practices)
4. Develop and promote business practices and enforcement of policies prohibiting drug use and sales in alcohol establishments. (Workgroup: Policy and Business Practices)

Health Advocates Rejecting Marijuana (HARM)

GOAL: Reduce marijuana use by youth to improve community wellness.

Objective: Reduce the acceptability of marijuana use among youth by decreasing the availability of marijuana-related paraphernalia, and eliminating messages that encourage, normalize, or trivialize marijuana use.

Activities:

1. Develop, enhance and/or advance local control of the placement and retail practices of establishments that sell merchandise that can be used as drug paraphernalia. (Workgroup: Policy)
2. Develop, enhance, and/or advance public policies and model business practices that 1) restrict distribution and sales of drugwear, drug related merchandise and drug paraphernalia, and 2) eliminate marijuana use at special events and outdoor venues (Workgroup: Media)
3. Develop, enhance and/or advance local control of the placement and retail practices of mobile and stationary marijuana dispensaries. (Workgroup: Policy)
4. Develop, enhance, and/or advance public policies and model business practices that reduce media portrayal of marijuana use as acceptable and/or harmless. (Workgroup: Media)

Cross Initiative Coordination

To maximize resources and avoid duplicative efforts across initiatives, some activities described above are coordinated across the three primary initiatives. Examples include: BUDI-RBSS and MSF address meth and other drug related activity in ABC licensed businesses; BUDI and HARM address policies and business practices that are designed to reduce the perception that drug wear and alcohol wear is inappropriate for youth consumers; and HARM and MSF address drug paraphernalia sales in business establishments.